

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05

H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02

SS-15 ICA-11 HA-05 ARA-10 AID-05 (ISO) W

-----124543 191122Z /12

R 190940Z JUN 78

FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 440

INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY BRAZZAVILLE

USMISSION GENEVA

USUN NEW YORK 1585

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SREF, AO, CG

SUBJECT: IRC ASSESSMENT OF STATUS OF ANGOLAN AND CABINDAN
REFUGEES

REF: A) KINSHASA 4143; B) KINSHASA A-43; C) KINSHASA 4724;
D) KINSHASA A-61; E) KINSHASA 5372

1. SUMMARY: AMBASSADOR MET JUNE 6, WITH LOU WIESNER, WASHINGTON
OFFICE OF THE INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE (IRC) AND IRC'S
KINSHASA REP. NICK ERJAVEC. WIESNER WAS FINISHING UP A MAY 22 -
JUNE 7 VISIT TO ZAIRE AND BOTH HE AND ERJAVEC HAD JUST COMPLETED
TWO FIELD TRIPS TO THE ANGOLAN AND CABINDAN REFUGEE AREAS IN
BAS ZAIRE REGION. WIESNER ADVISED THAT ERJAVEC'S PROPOSAL FOR
ANOTHER YEAR'S PROGRAM COSTING DOLS 1 MILLION (ALREADY PASSED TO
D/HA) APPEARED TO BE PRETTY ACCURATE. END SUMMARY.

2. WIESNER DESCRIBED THE SITUATION OF THE ANGOLAN REFUGEES IN
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CATARACTES SUBREGION OF BAS ZAIRE AS "SURPRISINGLY GOOD." THERE
WAS AN "ENORMOUS NUMBER" OF REFUGEES, AN ESTIMATED 55,000 AS
OF EARLY MAY, AND WIESNER BELIEVED THERE WERE PROBABLY
MORE. HIS PARTY HAD GONE RIGHT UP TO THE ANGOLAN BORDER
AND FOUND REFUGEES STILL ENTERING ZAIRE AT A RATE OF 50 - 100
PER DAY AT TWO MAIN CROSSING POINTS.

3. THE REFUGEES OFFERED THE FAIRLY UNIFORM EXPLANATION THAT THEY WERE FLEEING FROM FAPLA (ANGOLAN ARMY) AND THE CUBANS. THESE FORCES WERE SUPPOSEDLY SEARCHING OUT FNLA (NATIONAL FRONT FOR THE LIBERATION OF ANGOLA) SYMPATHIZERS, AND, ACCORDING TO THE REFUGEES, CONSIDERED THIS CATEGORY TO INCLUDE EVERYONE IN THE BORDER AREA. WHEN FAPLA SEIZED A VILLAGE IT WOULD KILL ALL THE MEN AND TAKE AWAY THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN. WIESNER ADDED THAT BOTH UNHCR AND THE GOZ ACCEPT THIS ACCOUNT OF FAPLA'S ACTIVITIES (REF A).

4. ERJAVEC STATED THAT THE MOVEMENT OF THE REFUGEES WAS ALMOST "BIBLICAL" AS THEY HEADED EN MASSE FOR THE PLANNED UNHCR RESETTLEMENT SITE ON THE PLATEAU NORTH OF KIMPESE. THE UNHCR PLANS TO SETTLE ABOUT 30,000 THERE AND ALMOST ALL OF THE REFUGEES HAVE APPARENTLY HEARD ABOUT IT. WIESNER HAD NOT SEEN THE SITE, ALTHOUGH HE HAD HOPED TO FLY OVER IT. THE OVERLAND APPROACH TO THE SITE INVOLVES A STEEP CLIMB, BUT THERE IS A ROAD PASSABLE TO TRUCKS AND FOUR-WHEEL DRIVE VEHICLES. NO ZAIRIANS WILL BE DISPLACED BY THIS RESETTLEMENT PROJECT.

5. GENERALLY, RELATIONS BETWEEN ZAIRIANS AND REFUGEES ARE EXCELLENT, EVEN IN BORDER VILLAGES WITH AN OVERWHELMING NUMBER OF REFUGEES. ALL AGREE THAT THERE IS ENOUGH LAND TO GO AROUND. THEY SHARE THEIR FOOD, PRESUMABLY INCLUDING THE QUITE SMALL 1/4 UNHCR RATION GIVEN TO THE REFUGEES, AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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EVERYONE SEEMED TO BE GETTING ENOUGH TO EAT. THE REFUGEES WILL EVENTUALLY RECEIVE ZAIRIAN ID CARDS, BUT MOST OF THEM ARE STILL MOVING AND HAVE NOT STAYED IN ONE PLACE LONG ENOUGH TO DO SO. SO FAR THE REFUGEES HAVE STOPPED ONLY WHEREVER THEY HAVE FOUND GOOD LAND. WIESNER AGREED THAT THE GOZ HAD A GOOD ATTITUDE TOWARDS REFUGEES. THE OFFICIALS WERE LENIENT, THE PEOPLE FRIENDLY, AND THERE WAS LITTLE OR NO RESENTMENT OF THE REFUGEES' PRESENCE.

6. UNHCR HAS FOOD FROM THE COMMON MARKET STOCKPILED AT KIMPESE, AS WELL AS DUTCH MILK AND RICE LOANED BY IRC. ERJAVEC ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THIS WAS US PL 480 RICE BOUGHT FROM THE NOGUEIRA COMPANY. HE HAD BOUGHT 100 BAGS AT THE OFFICIAL PRICE OF 27.25 ZAIRES EACH. NOGUEIRA HAS SINCE INSISTED IT HAS NO MORE RICE. WIESNER THEN STATED THAT ANOTHER UNHCR SHIPMENT WAS EXPECTED JUNE 15 OR 16. WHEREAS IRC DEALT IN COMPARATIVELY SMALL QUANTITIES, UNHCR WAS PRESENTLY EXPECTING 5,000 TONS OF FOOD NOW AND ANOTHER 5,000 TONS LATER IN THE YEAR. THIS WAS IN ADDITION TO 24,500 BLANKETS. THEREFORE, IRC HOPED THAT THE UN WOULD SOON BE ABLE TO INCREASE THE RATIONS DISTRIBUTED IN CATARACTES SUBREGION SINCE LOCAL CROPS WERE FAR BELOW NORMAL.

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H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
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7. WIESNER NOTED THAT THE POOR HARVESTS WERE ALSO A PROBLEM IN BAS FLEUVE SUBREGION. FOR EXAMPLE, THE ZAIRIAN SUBREGIONAL COMMISSIONER IN TSHELA HAD POINTED OUT THAT HIS PEOPLE NOW HAD LESS FOOD THAN THE REFUGEES. THEREFORE HE WANTED TO BE DIRECTLY INFORMED BY IRC OF ALL DISTRIBUTIONS, THE AMOUNTS, ETC. PREVIOUSLY ONLY THE CHEFS DE COLLECTIVITE HAD BEEN DIRECTLY INFORMED AND THEN THEY HAD REPORTED TO HIM. WIESNER SUSPECTED THAT THE COMMISSIONER WANTED TO BE ABLE TO CHECK HIS SUBORDINATES' ACCURACY. THE IRC-SUPPORTED DOCTOR AT KIZU HOSPITAL, VERONIQUE FALQUE, HAD ALSO REPORTED AN INCREASING NUMBER OF KWASHIORKOR CASES IN THE ZAIRIAN POPULATION, NOW REACHING TWICE THE 10 PERCENT RATE FOUND AMONG THE REFUGEES (REF B). THIS IS DIRECTLY ATTRIBUTABLE TO THE RECENT DROUGHT AND MANIOC BLIGHT (REF C).

8. OTHERWISE, WIESNER SAID, THE CABINDAN REFUGEE SITUATION WAS STABLE. TOTAL POPULATION WAS ESTIMATED AT 35,000 -
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38,000, OF WHOM 15,000 WERE IN THE UNHCR CAMPS AND ANOTHER 15,000 WERE IN THE 20 KM BELT ALONG THE FRONTIER IN TSHELA ZONE WHERE IRC WORKED (REF D). MOST OF THE REFUGEES STILL BELIEVED THEY WILL RETURN TO CABINDA, BUT THEY ARE SLOWLY ACCEPTING THE FACT THAT THEY WILL HAVE TO LIVE IN ZAIRE FOR A TIME. THE SCHOOL CHILDREN ARE STILL ENCOURAGED TO SING CABINDAN INDEPENDENCE SONGS. WIESNER CONCLUDED THAT ERJAVEC'S ESTIMATE OF DOLLARS 1 MILLION TO CONTINUE THE PROGRAM FOR ONE MORE YEAR APPEARED TO BE PRETTY ACCURATE.

9. THE AMBASSADOR STATED THAT THERE WAS INCREASING CONCERN AMONG THE "DONOR COUNTRIES" REGARDING THE FOOD SITUATION IN BAS ZAIRE AND KINSHASA OVER THE COMING MONTHS. IN ADDITION TO THE TWO ABOVE-NOTED EEC SHIPMENTS, OTHER SHIPMENTS WERE EXPECTED. WIESNER ADDED THAT IRC WILL BE INCREASING ITS OWN DELIVERIES, AS HE EXPECTED WOULD UNHCR, IN THE FACE OF THIS NEW SITUATION.

10. WIESNER DESCRIBED THE SECURITY SITUATION AS "PRETTY GOOD." HE SAW NO ZAIRIAN TROOPS ALONG THE ANGOLAN BORDER EXCEPT AT TIMASI, WHERE THERE HAD APPARENTLY BEEN A RECENT FAMILY VENDETTA IN WHICH 9 PEOPLE WERE KILLED (REF E). IN BAS FLEUVE, HOWEVER, THE BORDER WITH CABINDA WAS GUARDED AND WIESNER'S PARTY COULD NOT GET NEAR IT. IN FACT, THE LOCAL COMMANDANT PROVIDED A SOLDIER AS ESCORT BEFORE ALLOWING THEM TO VISIT ONE GROUP OF REFUGEES NEAR THE FRONTIER. NEVERTHELESS, THERE HAD BEEN NO RECENT INCURSIONS FROM CABINDA, REPORTEDLY IN PART BECAUSE FLEC NOW CONTROLS A STRIP OF THE FRONTIER AREA JUST INSIDE THE EXCLAVE.
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